

Benton Township Board Meeting

November 10th, 2021
7616 E State Road 45, Bloomington, IN, 47468

Attendance

- Joe Husk, Chair
- Hans Kelson, Secretary
- Lynn Stevens, Board Member
- Michelle Bright, Township Trustee
- Mary McInerney

Meeting called to order at 6:34 PM

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to Table Approval of October Minutes until next meeting: Kelson
Second: Stevens
Approved Unanimously
- Secretary Kelson will send in a draft of the minutes for Trustee Bright to provide to the state.

Reports

Financial Report

Rainy Day Fund

- YTD Expense in this fund is lower this month because Trustee Bright moved expenses for the Danny Smith Park project into the Recreation fund.
- YTD Expense: \$197,064.13
- Budget Remaining: \$27,935.87
- Cash Balance: \$28,591.59

Township Fund

- YTD Expense: \$52,251.50
- Budget Remaining: \$20,748.50
- Cash Balance: \$41,199.58

Township Assistance Fund

- YTD Expense: \$6,048.71
- Budget Remaining: \$33,951.29
- Cash Balance: \$96,393.77

Firefighting Fund

- Budget Remaining in this fund reflects the additional appropriation made in October.
- YTD Expense: \$437,279.83
- Budget Remaining: \$138,556.17
- Cash Balance: \$102,149.90

Cumulative Fire Fund

- YTD Expense: \$165,000.00
- Budget Remaining: \$34,069.00
- Cash Balance: \$34,069.22

Recreation Fund

- YTD Expense: \$22,547.61
- Budget Remaining: \$12,452.39
- Cash Balance: \$25,707.86

COVID Donation Fund (Restricted)

The State Board of Accounts has advised that donation funds be separated into restricted (donor-specified purposes) and unrestricted (general) funds.

- Deposits: \$0
- Cash Balance: \$510.68

COVID Reimbursement Fund

- Deposits: \$0
- Cash Balance: \$0

Township Donation Fund (Unrestricted)

- Deposits: \$0
- Cash Balance: \$420.00

FEMA Grant Fund

- When we got the FEMA grant for our Plymovent system in the Fire Department, we had to pay 5% of that cost from our Fire Fund. The rest of that balance is here, and the grant money will eventually be paid into this fund. The State Board of Accounts is not worried about this fund being negative at the start of the new year.
- MTD Expense: \$56,776.85

Deposits

- Reimbursement for over-payment for ITA Conference: \$100.00
- Local Income Tax: \$12,557.41
- Trust Indiana: \$6.92

Approval

- Motion to Approve Financial Reports: Kelson
Second: Stevens
Approved Unanimously

Trustee's Report

Division of Assets Discussion

- Trustee Bright met with Eric Deckard, Bill and Phyllis Young, and Lynn Stevens to discuss our plan for changing parcel boundaries.
- The Youngs feel that there is a second parcel between their house and our property, and have gathered supporting documentation for this.
- Eric Deckard met with the Youngs separately, and told Trustee Bright that he thought the conversation went well. Trustee Bright has not been able to schedule another meeting with the Youngs.
- If we are unable to come to an agreement, we will have to move forward with a Quiet Title. In that scenario, both sides will compile evidence, and a judge will decide where the boundary is. Trustee Bright would much rather have neighborly discussions and come to an agreement.

Senior Center

- The drainage work discussed previously has been completed.

Danny Smith Park

- The Lighting bill was paid.
- Although there was additional money left from the amount allocated for this project, Danny Smith Park is only asking for \$10,400.00 of it.

Fire Department

- Trustee Bright met with the Vice President of Building Associates. Previously, we had been working with their project manager. That person has since been let go, and the company has been cleaning up unfinished projects.
- Building associates will be handling re-pouring the apron in front of the Fire Department. We will only have to pay for digging a drainage trench.
- Building Associates will be providing a quote for making the front door of the Fire Department ADA Accessible.
- We have ceiling fans on order.
- Trustee Bright spoke with Fyffe Heating and Air Conditioning about the heat in the Fire Department being very inefficient. They were unable to come up with a solution. Trustee Bright informed the Fire District of this and recommended that they try to find someone to fix this.
- The tax rate for the Fire District will be lower than originally expected.

- The Fire District will be reaching out to all the various utility companies to find out what we need in order to transfer utilities to them. The Fire District may be required to take these over as of December 31st, rather than January 1st.
- As of January 1st, we will declare the Fire and Cumulative Fire funds dormant. Any money remaining in these funds will revert to the Rainy Day Fund.
- If bills arrive for the Fire Department after January 1st, we will need to pay them from the Rainy Day Fund.
- Trustee Bright will follow up with the State Board of Accounts to make sure this is correct, and also that we won't have problems making possible additional appropriations early in the year.

Halloween Event

- Our Halloween event was a success! Roughly 125 kids showed up.
- We were able to get a Smokey the Bear costume through the U.S. Forest Service.
- We had pictures printed on the spot.
- Refreshments were provided, including hot cider and hot chocolate.
- County Commissioner Penny Githens donated candy and the hot cider, and helped out with the whole event.

Cemeteries

- Stepp Cemetery:
 - The Stepp Cemetery sign has been replaced.
 - Baby Lester's headstone is on order, but supply chain issues mean this could take a while.
 - Pursell Monument will also repair some other headstones which were vandalized in the spring.

Township

- The Bloomington Chamber of Commerce has requested names and email addresses for the Benton Township Board members for their directory. All the Board Members agreed to have Trustee Bright send them this information.
- Pam Mitchell's last day of work for the Township was November 6th. Mary McInerney has jumped in and is doing a great job.

Next Meeting

- Our next meeting is on December 8th.

Approval

- Motion to Approve Trustee Report: Stevens
Second: Kelson
Approved Unanimously

Township Assistance Report

- One older woman on a fixed income telephoned asking for financial help for a large tree removal on her property. She received 2 suggested referrals.
- A landlord requested documentation regarding the manned fire station for submission to her property insurance company. Lori at the Monroe County Fire District is providing this.
- Assistance services from a large, local county church were updated on our reference list.
- An additional child care resource for early childhood programs was entered on our resource list.
- A homeless female was referred to the correct county trustee for Benton County Indiana.

Approval

- Motion to Approve Township Assistance Report: Stevens
Second: Kelson
Approved Unanimously

Fire Reports

- Monroe Fire Protection District provided two reports for us for runs in Benton Township or that Station 24 responded to.
- This month, there were 24 runs from our station, 23 of which were in Benton Township:
 - EMS: 21
 - Fire: 0
 - Hazardous Condition, no fire: 1
 - Good Intent Calls: 1
 - False Alarm: 1

Approval

- Motion to Approve Fire Reports: Kelson
Second: Stevens
Approved Unanimously

Old Business

- There was no Old Business at this meeting.

New Business

Fire District Merger Process

- The board reviewed documents that have been signed by other townships upon joining the district.
- Trustee Bright prepared a report of various things that we would like to include in our merger agreement with the Fire District:
 - Security Cameras: There are security cameras on each building, and we would like both parties to retain access to the entire system and share maintenance costs.
 - Septic Tanks: The Fire District will pay for 100% of pumping expenses for both tanks, and 100% of the eventual replacement cost for the back building's tank. The Township will contribute 33% to replacing the front building's tank, as it is also connected to the Senior Center.
 - Snow Removal: The Fire District will take care of Snow Removal on the Township Office/Senior Center parking lots and sidewalks.
 - * The Township and the Fire District will share costs for salt and sand, to be divided by square footage of the parking lot sections we use.
 - Utilities are already split.
 - * We currently share internet service. This is being worked on.
 - * We also currently share trash service and recycling. In 2022, this will be 100% taken care of by the Fire District.
 - The Fire District will handle basic mowing and landscaping of Township property, including sidewalks and flower beds.
 - * We anticipate a shared garden project as well.
 - Parking lot:
 - * Resealing and re-striping costs will be divided by square footage.
 - * The VA employee who currently uses a parking spot for his government vehicle will continue to be allowed to do so.

- * Firefighters will not park in the Senior Center/Township parking area.
 - The Fire District will Raise/Lower flags, purchase new flags, and complete any flagpole maintenance.
 - The Township will almost always retrieve the mail.
 - The Fire Department will receive deliveries when available.
 - The Fire District will continue to host special community events such as the Mother's Day Chili Supper/Auction and the Halloween Event.
 - We will have a driveway easement and a septic easement.
 - Equipment and vehicles which have been purchased by the township will remain here until the end of their useful life. The Fire District will be responsible for disposal at that time.
 - The Fire District will encourage volunteer participation.
 - * In 2023, we may have a floating third career firefighter at our station, which could make this difficult.
 - The Fire District will keep "Benton Township" in the name of the Fire Station to some degree.
 - Historical volunteer artifacts will stay in common areas for public viewing. If District is getting rid of items due to age/condition then the Township will have an opportunity to take them back.
 - If the Fire District someday no longer uses this property to provide fire service, it will revert to the Township.
- Board Member Kelson states that if the District wants or has to replace our equipment with something better, then they should be allowed to do so.

Approval

- Motion to Approve 2022 Budget: Kelson
Second: Stevens
Approved Unanimously

Public Comment

- Mary McInerney is afraid that the Fire District will eventually see serving Benton Township as an unworthy financial drain and want to discontinue fire services here. Additionally, she notes that the agreement states that if the Fire District were to stop using our station to provide fire service, we would receive the equipment we originally gave them as part of this agreement. This may not be sufficient to provide fire service. Mary would also like to see a specific time frame attached to the Snow Removal section of the agreement.

Adjournment

- Motion to Adjourn: Kelson
Second: Stevens
Meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM.